



STATE OF THE STRAIT MONITORING FOR SOUND MANAGEMENT



A BINATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE DETROIT RIVER ECOSYSTEM

Convened December 2004 by Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research, University of Windsor, The Greater Detroit American Heritage River Initiative of Metropolitan Affairs Coalition, The Detroit River Canadian Cleanup, The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, The Detroit Water and Sewerage Department, and other organizations.

Cover photos: photos left and center (upper and lower): Recreational fishing in the Huron-Erie Corridor (lower center photo by Kurt Byers, Michigan Sea Grant Extension, courtesy of United States Environmental Protection Agency, Great Lakes National Program Office; other photos courtesy of OMNR); upper right: Scientist sampling water, benthic invertebrates and sediment in Lake Erie (photo courtesy of Environment Canada and University of Windsor); lower right: Longear sunfish (*Lepomis megalotis*) (photo courtesy of Nicolas Lapointe)

STATE OF THE STRAIT
MONITORING FOR SOUND MANAGEMENT

2004 Conference Proceedings

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APPENDIX IV: PRESS RELEASE FROM STREAM TEAM AND WAYNE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT



NEWS RELEASE

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The Stream Team and the Wayne County Department of Environment (WCDOE) are teaming up to restore and protect the water resources in the Wayne County downriver area. The collaboration is proposed to involve three major efforts: stream monitoring, riparian corridor management/creek restoration projects and watershed management public awareness education. The intent of the collaboration is to assist local communities, public school districts and the County with compliance under the State of Michigan's General Storm Water Permit (MIG619000) while educating students using the local natural environment and current issues as the classroom.

Stream Team teachers, with assistance and support from Watershed Management Division of the WCDOE, will work with high school students empowering them to identify, evaluate and solve real world problems using real world techniques and technology. Stream monitoring will involve both ecosystem health monitoring and investigative "hot spot" monitoring initiatives. Riparian corridor management will involve the planning, design and implementation of stream bank restoration and protection projects and river clean up days. Watershed management public awareness education is proposed to involve Annual State of the Creeks workshops hosted by Stream Team schools as well as multi-disciplinary involvement in the creation of various public outreach and education displays, tools, and materials.

"Wayne County is pleased to collaborate with the Stream Team to build the County's capacity to monitor watersheds in a scientifically defensible fashion. Further, the County's participation ensures that the data from Stream Team monitoring will be used to guide watershed management decisions under the State of Michigan's General Storm Water Permit. This represents a major step forward in making sure that volunteer monitoring is accepted, trusted, and used by management agencies."

Kurt Heise, Director
Wayne County Department of Environment

The first major implementation of this collaboration was launched on October 22, 2004 with implementation of the First Annual Volunteer Stream Bug Hunt. On this day, Wayne County staff supported Stream Team teachers and students from seven local schools who sampled at six different locations for macro invertebrates insects (“bugs”) in the Ecorse Creek, Frank and Poet, Blakely and Huron River watersheds. Schools participating in this Bug Hunt included: Ecorse High School, Southgate Anderson High School, Creative Montessori Middle School, Riverview High School, Monguagon Middle School, Trenton High School and Woodhaven Middle School. In total, 115 people were involved in this fall monitoring event. Bug Hunt scores for the sites ranged from Poor to Fair and the different number of taxa (type of bug) ranged from five to 17. Three of the sites rated Fair and two rated Poor. The Silver Creek in the Lower Huron Watershed (site HR-1) had the distinction of having the highest number of taxa (17). The Frank and Poet Drain (site CD-5) within the Combined Downriver watershed had the highest score (31.9) as sampled by Trenton High School and Woodhaven Middle School students. The lowest score (12.3) was recorded by Creative Montessori Middle School students on the Frank and Poet Drain (site CD-1). Although it is too early to make any real conclusions from the monitoring results (it requires a minimum of three years of data to establish a true baseline) much was learned by all participants. Some of the most water quality sensitive bugs found include gilled snails, narrow winged damselfly nymphs, small squaregill mayfly, and water scorpions.

The next major effort will be conducting the first State of the Creeks workshop to be hosted by a Stream Team school. Current plans are to hold the workshop in February of 2005. Through this event, efforts thus far and plans for the future can be shared with students, their parents and the general public for comment and further participation. At the event, plans for implementation of streambank restoration projects to be conducted in the spring will be announced and opportunities to learn the techniques and participation in hands-on restoration projects will also be announced.

The Stream Team is a part of Downriver Citizens for a Safe Environment, which was founded in 1989 by residents in five downriver communities to address chemical exposure to area residents. As the organization grew, members decided to undertake an outreach program to help become more proactive in the community. Two members, Mr. Bruce Szczehowski and Mr. John Nasarzewski, were approached to pilot a project in their schools to help educate and restore a small section of degraded streambed. It was such a resounding success that this pilot project took on a life of its own and has flourished ever since.